



WESTERN
LANDOWNERS
ALLIANCE

Annual Report

2023

WLA gathered ranchers and researchers on rangeland in eastern New Mexico to investigate how their management practices influence soil carbon, water infiltration and lesser prairie-chicken habitat.

Enchantment **Established.**

WLA's committed leadership in diverse coalition leads to historic investment in working lands and natural resources in New Mexico.

With overwhelming bipartisan support, New Mexico has made an historic investment in its land and water future. Backed by a broad state-wide coalition, this WLA initiative established the Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund in 2023 with an initial \$100 million appropriation. Interest generated from the fund will support projects that improve watershed health and clean water availability, reduce wildfire risk, support rural economies and outdoor recreation, and protect the state's vulnerable soil and wildlife resources.



Adapting to a **Drying West.**

The landowner voice on the future of Colorado River

WLA partnered with the Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources at the University of Wyoming for an in-depth survey of more than 1,000 farmers and ranchers in the Colorado River Basin. The results showed that the vast majority of agricultural water users in the basin have already adopted some water conservation measures. It also revealed that recent state and federal efforts to fund conservation in the Basin need to be better targeted to be effective. Major media coverage



of the report reached the region's urban public and elevated landowners actions and concerns about the future of agriculture, healthy landscapes and wildlife in the basin.

Read the report:

wla.social/agwater-survey

Leveraging funding for **water stewardship**.

Our support helps landowner-led groups secure millions to improve watersheds in the Colorado River Basin.

A flood of money was coming to the Colorado River Basin in 2023. Our support helped landowner and tribal-led collaboratives across the Basin channel that deluge into meaningful projects that empowered private land stewardship across the basin.

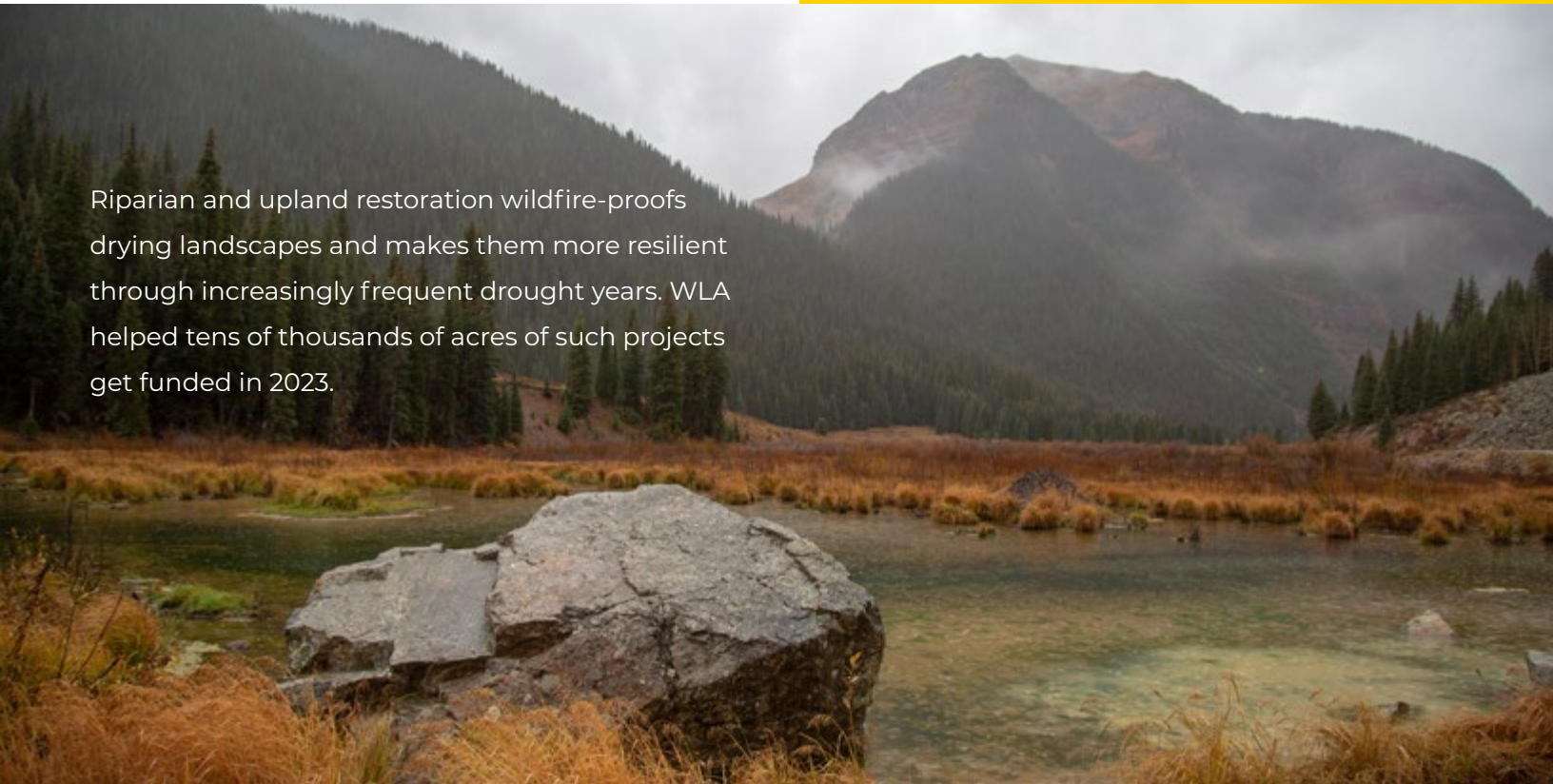
Landowner-led watershed organizations often have limited capacity for project development, planning, and coordination. Those challenges are compounded by short turn-around times and match requirements when applying for major federal funding opportunities. This limited capacity creates major barriers for local groups' abilities to take advantage of the once-in-a-generation influx of federal grant support. WLA stepped into this gap to help write nearly \$16 million worth of submitted applications for watershed restoration and management projects in the West

in 2023, mostly to programs receiving temporary infusions of funding from the Inflation Reduction Act or Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

By the end of 2023, \$4.2 million worth of those applications had been awarded!

\$4.2M

in watershed restoration and management funds came to landowner or tribal-led watershed groups thanks to WLA grant writing support in 2023.



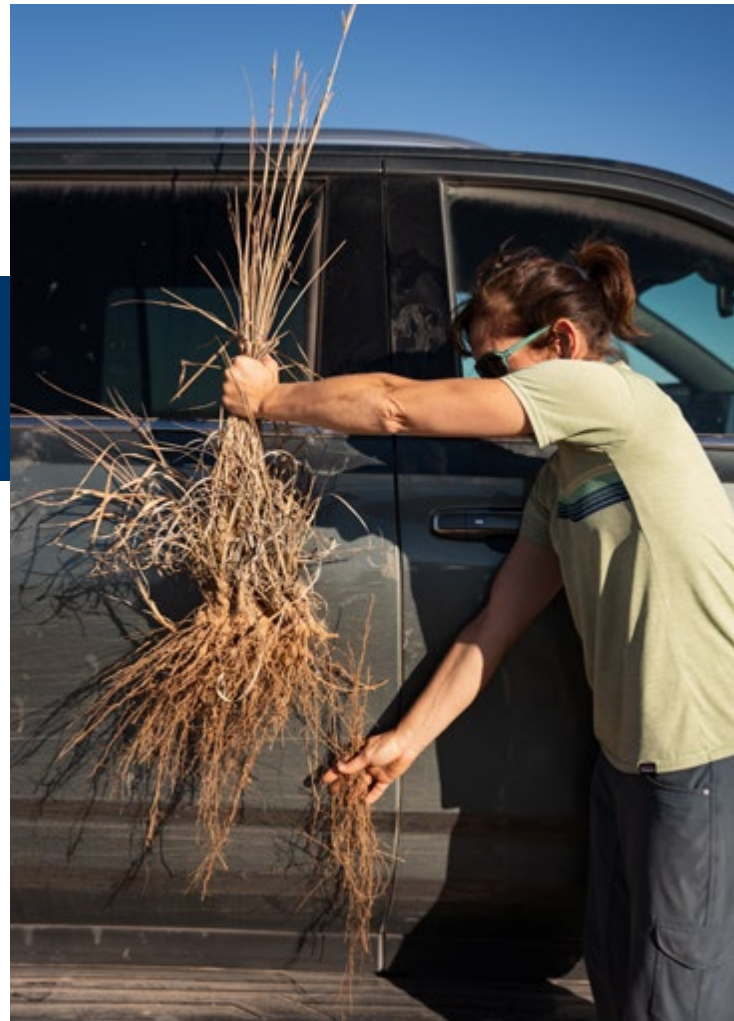
Riparian and upland restoration wildfire-proofs drying landscapes and makes them more resilient through increasingly frequent drought years. WLA helped tens of thousands of acres of such projects get funded in 2023.



North by **Northwest.**

More support for landowners in Idaho and Oregon

Lane Justus (left, top) and Ellie Gage (left, bottom) joined the team in Idaho and Oregon, respectively, in 2023. They hit the ground running, providing support landowners, and liaising directly with state agencies on landowners' behalfs, on issues related to wolf-livestock conflict, elk management, wildfire, drought and numerous other challenges.



A Home **on the Range.**

Literal grassroots organizing helps ranchers survive alongside endangered species.

America's grasslands are among some of our most endangered ecosystems: dwindling with them are the livestock businesses that could make grassland restoration pay. With support from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and funding partners Burger King and Cargill, we organized a coalition of ranchers in the southern Great Plains to implement and monitor improved grazing to "grow prairie-chicken habitat," as rancher Bret Riley puts it.

Learn more: wla.social/nm-rangelands

Big News for **Big Game.**

Habitat leasing protects more working lands habitat in the Northern Rockies than ever before.

Well-managed working lands provide important habitat to most wildlife species in the West. While landowners appreciate and value wildlife, in some cases, sustaining wildlife comes at significant cost. Habitat leasing provides a means to compensate for this cost, enabling landowners to diversify income and remain economically viable while continuing to support wildlife on their land. Western Landowners Alliance has worked for the past nine years to pilot habitat leasing at scale under the Grasslands Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). This effort is a key component of the USDA-WY Big Game Partnership. The program provides annual rental payments of a minimum of \$13/year/acre over a 10-to-15-year contract period for landowners who agree to manage their grazing to benefit grasslands ecosystems and wildlife habitat. It also enables landowners to “stack” Grassland

CRP payments and EQIP cost-share funding so that producers can both adapt their grazing management and make additional improvements such as weed management and wildlife-friendly fencing.

The initiative is proving successful and landowner interest exceeds available funding. As of 2023, **61,149 acres were enrolled in the Grassland Conservation Reserve Program habitat leasing pilot in the big game priority zone.** The USDA has also awarded an additional **\$11 million in EQIP funding to support conservation practices on over 300,000 acres.** Based on the success of the Wyoming pilot, the USDA has expanded the program to Montana and Idaho. WLA continues to support outreach and enrollment as well as advocate for the program in the next farm bill.



61,149

acres enrolled in habitat leasing pilot in Wyoming's big game priority zone in 2023.



Assurances and **Audio.**

Two paths to better endangered species conservation

The US Fish and Wildlife Service estimates that more than 70% of endangered species rely on private land for critical habitat. WLA is working with the USFWS to provide landowners with easier access to **regulatory assurances** in exchange for the voluntary conservation and recovery of imperiled wildlife. In 2023, we drafted an improved legal agreement that **protects landowners who proactively help recover imperiled fish, birds and insects** that live in or around rivers and streams, smoothing the path to landowner-led conservation. Alongside these critical legal protections, WLA partnered with Montana State University Extension on a second season of our award-winning podcast, Working Wild U, to **shine a light on the successes and challenges of landowner-led conservation.**



Working Wild U was awarded Gold from the Association of Natural Resource Extension Professionals in 2023!

Listen to the pod:
workingwild.us

Leading the **Pack.**

Getting ranchers the tools they need to succeed alongside wolves and grizzlies.

As gray wolves spread back across the West, dispersing from growing populations in the Northern Rockies and through reintroduction in Colorado, WLA has led efforts to reduce conflicts and losses. Our work to expand testing of non-lethal conflict reduction tools to more landowners and landscapes around the West led to important new science on their effectiveness and adoption as well as updated practice standards

for federal cost-share programs. Better science, better policy, better management: that's the power of positive leadership from the land.



Learn more: wla.social/working-wild-challenge

Making a **Movement.**



Western Landowners Alliance doubles membership in 2023!

In 2023, we more than doubled our membership, **adding more than 4,000 new members!** We have members in all 50 states, with over 90% hailing from the American West. Our members are ranchers, farmers, foresters, natural resource management professionals, and more, all with a vested interest in a whole and healthy West.

8,500

members and growing!

[as of December 2023]

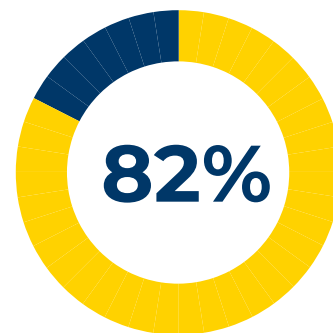
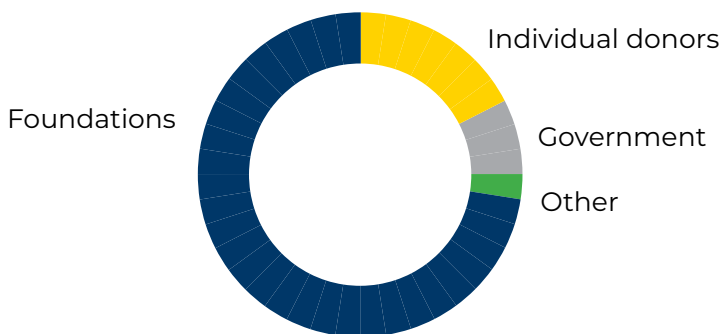
Know someone who should join?
Send them here: wla.social/join-us

Financial **Overview.**

find our form 990 at
westernlandowners.org/annual-report

Revenue Sources by %	2023
Foundations	71
Government Grants and Contracts	10
Individuals and Businesses	16
Other	3
Total Revenue	\$3,692,922

Expenses Categories by %	2023
Program Delivery	82
Fundraising	6
Management & Administration	12
Total Expenses	\$2,991,087



of our resources were spent directly delivering programming and support to landowners, working lands and wildlife.

An NRCS technician sets up a drone at a WLA-organized workshop in the Klamath Basin of Oregon.



more
info

westernlandowners.org

Contact us

P.O. Box 27798
Denver, Colorado
80227

Phone: (505) 466-1495

Email: info@westernlandowners.org

Facebook: [@westernlandownersalliance](https://www.facebook.com/westernlandownersalliance)

Instagram: [@westernlandowners](https://www.instagram.com/westernlandowners)

Twitter: [@voiceofWLA](https://twitter.com/voiceofWLA)

Linkedin: [@westernlandownersalliance](https://www.linkedin.com/company/westernlandownersalliance)

